CHARACTERISTICS OF TAMIL AS AN SOV LANGUAGE

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1.Introduction

This paper gives the syntactic structure of SOV languages with special reference to modern standard Tamil from the perspectives of typology.

2. Structure of Simple Clauses

2.1. Basic Word Order

Tamil is a verb-final language. Word order in the sentence is relatively free, as long as the sentence ends with a main verb. For example, 'Raja introduced Rani to Mary' in Tamil can have the following word-order variations:

1. a. *raaja meeriyai raaNikku aRimukappaTuttinaan*
   Raja Mary_ACC Rani_DAT introduce_PAS_he

   b. *raaja raaNikku meeriyai aRimukam ppaTuttindaan*

   c. *meeriyai raaja raaNikku aRimukappaTuttinaan*

   d. *meeiyai raaNikku raajaa aRimukappaTuttinaan*

   e. *raaNikku raajaa meeriyai aRimukappaTuttinaan*

   f. *raaNikku meeriyai aRimukappaTuttinaan*

Nominative is unmarked. *-ai* and *-ukku* are case markers representing the accusative, and dative cases respectively. The above sentences are identical in logical content but are different in discourse presupposition in a very subtle way.

The subject-initial sentence pattern is the most common among the various word order patterns. It was found that sentences with SOV word order occur more frequently than sentences with OSV order. (This is a cross-linguistic characteristic, as observed in Greenberg 1963, Greenberg's Language Universal 1: In declarative sentences with nominal order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object.) Greenberg's observation is not without exception. There is, however, at least one syntactic argument for hypothesizing SOV, and not, say OSV, as representing the underlying word order for Tamil.

In contrast with OV language, the subject is the mandatory nominal constituent of SVO languages, as in sentence with intransitive verbs, or in equational sentences

2. raajaa neeRRu tirumpi vataan
   Raja yesterday having returned came-he
   Raja returned yesterday.
3. avan taamatippaan
   he delay-fut-he
   He will be late.
4. raajaa maaNavan alla
   Raja student not
   Raja is not a student.
5. pooTTi muTintatu
   match end-pas-it
   The match is over.

2.2. Word Order in Colloquial Speech

In written Tamil, sentences are almost exclusively SOV, but in colloquial speech nonverbal elements can appear after the main clause verb. For example, observe the following sentences:

6. a. *ndii indta puttakattaip paTittaayaa*↑ ?
   you (theme) this book_ACC read
   'Have you read this book?'
   b. *ndii paTi-tt-aay-aa indap puttakatt-ai*↓
   you read_PAS_Q this book_ACC
   c. *paTi-tt-aay-aa ndii indta puttakatt-ai*↓
   read_PAS_Q you this book_ACC

In colloquial speech *-ai* (accusative) is often deleted. What is noteworthy about 6.b, c is that the rise in intonation characteristic of an interrogative sentence is placed on the verb, and not on the last word of the sentence.

Postverbal constituents can be elements in subordinate clauses, as can be seen in the following examples:

7.a. *ndii ndaam ndeeRRu andta viTutiy-il enna caappiT-T-oom enpat-ai ndinaivukuuRu-kiR-aay-aa*?

you we yesterday that restaurant_LOC what eat_PAST_we COM_A

remember_PRE_you_Q

'Do you remember what we ate at that restaurant the other day?'

b. *ndii enna caappiT-T-oom enpat-ai ndinaivukuur-kiR-aay ndeeRRu andta viTutiy-il*

you what eat_PAS_we COM_ACC remember_PRE_you_Q yesterday that restaurant

c. *enna caappiT-T-oom enapat-ai ndinaivukuur-kkiR-ay-aa ndii ndeeRRu andta viTuttiy-il*

what eat_PAS_we COM_ACC remember_PRE_you_Q you

Postverbal *ndeeRRu* 'the other day' and *andta viTutiyil* 'at that restaurant' in 7b, c are constituents which appear in interrogative clause in 7.a. The "afterthought" analysis of nonverb-final sentences makes it possible to make the following two predictions (Kuno, 1978:62).

(i) Postverbal elements are either discourse-predictable (or rather, the speaker assumes that they are) or supplementary; therefore, the sentences should have made sense without them.

(ii) Elements that would change the interpretation of the first part of the sentence cannot appear postverbally.

These predictions are borne out by the following examples:

8. a. *ndii enna caappiT-ap poo-kiR-aay*↑ ?

you what eat_INF go_PRE-you

'What are you going to eat?'

b. **ndii caappiT-ap poo-kiR-aay enna*↓

you what eat_INF go_ PRE-ICL

9. a. *ndaan tamizh ndaaTT-iRku muunRu taTavai maTTum pooyiru-kkiR-een*.

I Tamilnadu_DAT three times only go_PAS_I

'I have been to Tamilnadu only three times.'

8. b shows that wh-words cannot appear postverbally. This is because (i) wh-elements are discourse-nonanaphoric; and (ii) the postverbal addition of a wh-element would change the interpretation of the first part of the sentence completely, from that of a yes-or-no question (i.e. 'Did you eat?') to that of an interrogative-word question (i.e., 'What did you eat?')

2.3. Simple Sentence Types

Tamil sentence can be divided into three categories depending upon whether their verbals are (i) verbs, (ii) adjectives, or (iii) copulas. All three of these types of verbals conjugate with respect to tense, mode, and subordinating types:

2.3.1. Verbs

The following orders can be found in Tamil with reference to verb, subject, object and indirect object order:

10. a. S O V : *raajaa va-ndt-aan* 'Raja came.'
Raja come_PAS_he

b. S O V : *raaja oru kaTitam ezhut-in-aan*
Raja a letter write_PAS_he
'Raja wrote a letter.'

c. S IO DO V: *raajaa raaNikku oru kaTitam ezhut-in-aan*
Raja Rani_DAT a letter write_PAS_he
'Raja wrote a letter to Rani.'

d. S IO V: *raajaa pukazh-ukku aacaippaT-T-aan*
Raja fame_DAT long_PAS_he
'Raja longed for fame'

Transitive constructions in Tamil acquire inanimate subjects, for example.

11.a. *puyalkaaRRu viiTT-in veeliy-ai azhi-tt-atu*
typhoon house_GEN fence_DAT destroy_PAS_it
'The typhoon destroyed the house's fence.'

2.3.2. Adjectives

Adjectives can occupy a predicate position, where they are inflected for person-number-gender.

8.a. *raajaa iLamaiyaana-van*

Raja young_he

'Raja is young'

b. *indta kuLirkaalam mikavum kuLircciyaanatu*

this winter very cold_it

'It is cold this winter'

In the following example adjective is expressed by an adverbial form (derived from noun) followed by a copula:

12. a. *raajaa innum iLamaiy-aaka iru-kkiR-aan*

Raja still youngness_ADV be_PRE_he

'Raja is still young.'

b. *indata kuLirkaalam mikavum kuLir-aaka iru-kkiR-atu*

this winter very coldness_ADV be_PRE_it

'It is very cold this winter.'

2.3.3. Copulas

Copula is used in grammatical description to refer to a linking verb, i.e. a verb which has little independent meaning, and whose main function is to relate other elements of clause structure, especially subject and complement. In Tamil, the main copulative verb is *iru* 'be'. It links the adverbialized nominal form (i.e. *-aaka* suffixed nominal form) with the subject.

13.a. *raaNi azhak-aaka iru-kkiR-aaL*

Rani beauty_ADV be_PRE_she

'Rani is beautiful'

14.a. *raajaa aaciriyar-aaka iru-kkiR-aan*

raajaa teacher_ADV be_PRE_he

'Raja is a teacher.'

b. *raajaa aaciriyar-aaka iru-ndt-aan*

Raja teacher_ADV be_PAS_he

'Raja was a teacher.

Thus, Tamil also has a word class called nominal-adverbs. Nominal-adverbs are adjectival in meaning, but they do not conjugate when followed by copula *iru*.

15. a. *indta teru amaitiay-aaka iru-kkiR-atu*

this street quiteness_ADV is_it

This street is very quite'

b. *raajaa ndeermaiy-aaka iru-kkiR-aan*
Raja honest_ADV is_he
'Raja is honest.'

2.4. Agreement

Verbs, adjectives, and copulas show number, person and gender agreements.

16. a. *raajaa andta kaTitattaip paTittaan*

Raja that letter_ACC read_he

'Raja read the letter.

b. aaciriyar raajaa andta kaTitatt-aip paTi-tt-aar
teacher Raja that letter_ACC read_he (hon.)

'Teacher Raja read the letter.' (Respect for teacher Raja)

17.a. *raajaa iLamaiyaana-van*
Raja young_he
'Raja is young.'

b. *aaciriyar raajaa iLamaiyaana-var*
teacher Raja young_he
'Teacher Raja is young.' (Respect for Teacher Raja)

18.a. *avaL azhak-aaka iru-kkiR-aaL*
she beauty-ADV be-PRE-she
'she is beautiful'

2.5. Subjectless sentence

Tamil allows deletion of subjects and objects that are recoverable from linguistic or non-linguistic context. For example, observe the following sentences:

19.a. *varu-v-aan enRu ndinai-kkiR-een*
come_FUT-he COM think_PRE_I
'I thought that he would come'

b. *ndaan puttakam vaangk-i un-akkut taru-kiR-een*
I book buy_VBP you_DAT give_PRE_I
'I will buy the book and give it to you'

c. *ameerikkaavu-kkup pook-a virumpu-kiR-aay-aa* .
America_DAT go_INF want _PRE_Iyou-ICL
'I want to go to America.'

d. *ameerikkaavukkup pooka virumpukiRaayaa*?
America_DAT go_INF want _PRE_you_ICL

e. raajaavin viiTTukkkup poona pootu avan angkillai
Raja's house_DAT go_INF time he there_not
'When I went to Raja's house, he was not there."

The subjects are rather freely deleted because they are readily recoverable from agreement. Object are deleted as they can be recovered form discourse context.

In Tamil the subject NP is also an obligatory element in all sentences and that Tamil has, thus, a few types of subjectless sentences (Lehman, 1989: 175). The data which suggest that subject NP is not generated in the sentence structure do not involve simple, but complex sentences, in which clause is embedded as complement to a verb. Consider the following example:

20.a. *raja raaNiy-aic candti-kka neer-ndt-aan*
Raja-Rani-Acc meet-INF happen-PAS-it
'It happened that Raja saw Rani

b. *raaNi ndalla-vaL poolat teri-kiR-aaL*
Rani nice-she seem-INF happen-PAS-it
'It seems as if Rani is a nice one '

c. *raja varu-v-aan poolum*
Raja come-FUT- he seem-FUT-it
'It seems as if Raja comes

That is to say that there are sentences in Tamil in which the verbal predicate takes only a sentential complement as its argument, but no subject NP of whatever sort, e.g. pleonastic elements like 'it' or 'there' in English.

2.6. Adpositions

Tamil, as an SOV language, displays all the characteristics that Greenberg (1963) has attributed to SOV languages. One of the characteristics is concerned with adpositions. Tamil adpositions are all postpositional. The following examples are the samples of adpositions classified according to their functions, excluding those that are used in connecting clauses.

21. Emphatic particles

a. *raajaav-um oru aRivaaLi*

Raja_EMP a genius

Raja, too, is a genius."

b. *raajaa maTTum va-ndt-aan*

Raja only come_PAS_he

'Only Raja came.'

22. Noun–coordinating particles

a. *raajaav-um raaNiy-um va-ndt-aarkaL*

raajaa_COR Rani_COR come_PAS_they

Raja and Rani came

raajaav-oo raaNiy-oo varu-v-aarkaL

Raja_DIS Rani_DIS

'Either Raja or Rani will come.'

23. Case-marking particles

a**.** *raajaa raaNiy-uTan kaar-il tanjcaavuur-ilirundtu cennai-kkuc ce-nR-aan*

Raja Raani_with car_LOC Thanjavur_from cennai_DAT go_PAS_he

'Raja went with Rani by car from Thanjavur to Chennai'

b. *raajaav-in tandt-ai cennai-kkuc ce-nR-aar*

Raja_GEN father Chennai_DAT go_PAS_he (hon)

'Raja's father went to Chennai.'

24. Sentence – Final Particles

a. *ndii anta puttakatt-aip paTi-tt-aay-aa*?

you this book ACC read_PAS_Q

'Did you read this book?'

b. *ndaan indta puttakam munnaree paTittuviT-T-een enRu unniTam co-nn-een allavaa*

I this book already read_PAS_I COM you_to say_PAS_Iis- not-tag Q

'I told you that I have read this book already, is n't it'

c. *anda aaL aRivaaLitaan*!

that person genius_ EXC

'That man is genius!'

d. *ndii neeRRu paLLikkuTam var-a-villai, appaTittaan-ee*?

you yesterday school come_INF not, that-way_Tag-Q

'You didn't come to school yesterday, did you?'

Note that Tamil uses the sentence-final particles in forming interrogative sentences as seen in 24.a. The use of sentence-final question particles is a characteristic of postpostional languages, as observed by Greenberg: (Kuno,1978:80). Greenberg Language Universals 9: "With more than chance frequency, when question particles or affixes are specified in position by reference to the sentence as a whole, if initial, such elements are found in prepositional languages, and, if final, in postpositional languages, and, if final, in postpositional."

2.7. Comparison of Inequality

Tamil adjective and nominal-adjectives do not inflect with respect to comparative and superlative degrees. Instead, they use optional degree adverbs such as *mikavum/kuuTutal* 'more' which appear to the left of the adjective. The postpositional particle *viTa/kaaTTilum* 'than' is used as a marker of comparison, with the standard with which the comparison is made preceding *viTa/kaaTTilum*:

25. a. *raajaavai viTa raaNi iLamaiyaanavaL*
Raja_ACC COMP Rani young_she
Rani is younger than Raja
b. *indta vakuppil raajaataan mikavum iLamaiyaanavan*
this class_LOC Raja-Emp very young_he
'In this class, Raja is the youngest.'

The order of "Standard-Marker of comparison-Adjective" exemplified by 25.a. agrees with the following observation by Greenberg. Greenberg's Language Universal 22: If in comparison of superiority, the only order, or one of the alternative orders, is standard-marker adjective, then the language is postpositional. With overwhelmingly more than chance frequency if the only order is adjective-marker-standard, the language is prepositional.

3. Nominal Phrases

Lehmann (1973.82) makes the following observation by his Structural Principle of Language: Modifiers are placed on the opposite side of a basic syntactic element from its primary concomitant. The above observation applies to Tamil as well as descriptive adjectives, demonstratives, numerals, and relative clauses all precede their head nouns, without exception.

Tamil does not have indefinite or definite articles. This does not mean, however, that nouns can be used freely both anaphorically and nonanaphorically. Observe the following sentences:

26.a. *ndeeRRu ndaan puttakakkaTaiyilirundtu puttakam vaangkineen. matiya uNaviRkkup piRaku puttakam paTitteen*

yesterday I bookstore_from buy_PAS_I. book lunch_DAT after book read_PAS_I

'Yesterday, I bought a book at a Bookstore. After lunch, I read a book.'

The second sentence in 26.a. can mean only 'I read a book'; it cannot mean 'I read the book.' In order to convey the latter meaning, one has to modify *puttakam* 'book' with a demonstrative adjective:

27.a. *matiya uNviRkup piRaku andta puttakattaip paTitteen*

dinner_DAT after that book read_PAS_I

'After dinner, I read that book.'

The above does not mean, however, that Tamil uses a demonstrative adjective whenever English uses *the*. Observe the following sentences:

28.a. *ndeeRRu oru uyaramaana manitar-um kuLLamaana manitar-um enn-aip paar-kka vandt-anar. uyaramaana manitar tan kaiy-il uunRukool vaittiru-ndt-aar*

yesterday one tall man_CO short man_CO I_ACC see_INF come_PAS_they. tall man his hand LOC walking stick keep_PAS_he

'Yesterday, a tall man and a short man came to see me.The tall man had a walking stick in his hand.'

In the second sentence, *uyaramaana manitar* 'the tall man' does not have *andta* 'that'. In fact, in this context, it is not possible to use any demonstrative adjective.

3.1. Relative Clauses

Relative clauses in Tamil always precede their head nouns:

29. a. *andta aaL indta puttakatt-ai ezhut-in-aar*

that person this book_ACC write_PAS_he

'That person wrote this book.'

b. indta puttakatt-ai ezhut-in-a andta aaL

this book_ACC write_ADJ that person

'The person who wrote this book

30. a. *raajaa andta puttakatt-aip paTi-tt-aan*

Raja that book- ACC read- PAS-he

'Raja read that book.'

b. rajaa paTi-tt-a puttakam

Raja read –PAST-RP book

'the book that Raja read'

31.a. *raajaa andta aaL-uTan ceer-ndt-u paTi-tt-aar*

Raja that person-with join-PAST-VBP study-PAST-he

'Raja studied together with that person.'

b. raajaa ceer-ndt-u paTi-tt-a aaL

Raja join-PAST-VBP- study_PAST_RPM person

'the person with whom Taroo studied'

The following sentence 32b. is ungrammatical.

32. a. *raajaa andta aaL-uTan paTi-tt-aan*

'Raja studied with that person.'

*b. *raajaa paTi-tt-a andta aaL*

'the person with whom Raja studied'

32.b. is ungrammatical in the intended interpretation (it is grammatical if it is intended for 'the person that Raja studied') because the deleted particle *uTan* 'with' is not recoverable. In 32.b *ceerndtu* together makes it possible to supply this particle.

3.2. Genitives

Genitive expressions precede head nouns, as seen in the following:

33. a. *raajaav-in viiTu*

raajaa_GEN house

Raja's house

b. *raajaav-in tandtaiy-in viiTu*

Raja's father's house

'Raja's father's house'

In English, genitive expressions such as *the man I met yesterday's wife* are rather exceptional (cf. ??*the man I met's wife*). By contrast, in Tamil, such expressions are very common because the relative clause precedes the head noun, and hence the genitive marker *in* always follows the head noun of the relative construction.

34. a. *ndeeRRu candti-tt-a maintain-in manaivi*

yesterday meet_PAS_RPM man_GEN wife

'the man whom I met yesterday's wife'

b. *ndeeRRu ndaan candi-tt-a maintain-in manaivi veelai cey-kiR-a ndiRuvanatt-in talaivar*

yesterday I meet_PAS_RPM man_GEN wife work do_PRE_RPM institute_GEN head

'the president of the company where the wife of the man that I met

yesterday is employed'

c. *neeRRu ndaan candi-tt-a maintain-in manaivi veelai cey-kiR-a ndiRuvanatt-in talaivar ezhut-iy-a puttakatt-in veLiyiiTTaaLar*

'the publisher of the book that the president of the company where

the 'wife of the man that I met yesterday is employed wrote'

Cleft branching constructions of the above type are extremely common in Tami, and they do not cause any difficulty in comprehension.

3.3. Numerals and Quantifiers

Numerals are basically nouns that distinguished into cardinal and ordinal numerals. Ordinal numerals are derived from cardinal numerals by the addition of a clitic (Lehmann, 1989:111). Cardinal numerals occur as nominals. As such they occur, for example, as object NP inflected for accusative case. as nominal predicate, or as nominal argument of a postposition in the postpositional phrase.

35. a. *raajaa onR-ai maTTum cappiT-T-aan*

Raja one_ACC only eat_PAS_he

'Raja ate only one'

b. *raajaain vayatu muppatu*

Raja_GEN age thirty

Raja's age is thirty'

c. *raajaa nduuRu-kku meelee eNN-in-aan*

Raja hundred_DAT over count_PAS_he

'Raja counted over one hundred'

As nominals, cardinal numerals also occur as noun modifiers. They occur in the same position as quantifiers do that is in the slot: ---+ Adj + N. Furthermore, they can also be transposed to the post-nominal position.

36. a. *raajaa aindtu ndalla caTTaikaL vaangk-in-aan*

Raja five nice shirts buy_PAS_he

'Raja bought five nice shirts'

b. *raajaa ndalla caTTaikaL aindtu vaangk-in-aan*

Raja nice shirts five buy_PAS_he

'Raja bought five nice shirts'

Ordinal numerals derived by means of the clitic *-aavatu* is nominal whereas the ordinal numerals derived by means of clitic *-aam* is adjectival. The former can occupy predicate position and can be adverbialized by *-aaka* (which occur before verb). Both the former and latter types of ordinal numerals can occur as a noun modifier.

37.a. *indta tokuti iraNT-aavatu*

this volume is two_ORD

'This volume is second one'

b. *rajaa iraNT-aavat-aaka va-ndt-aan*

Raja two_ORD_ADV come_PAS_he

'Raja came second'

c. *itu iraNT-aavatu tokuti*

this two_ORD volume

'This is the second volume'

d. *itu iraNT-aam tokuti*

this two_ORD volume

'This is the second volume'

4. Verbal Phrases

4.1. Declarative, Interrogative, and Negative

Tamil distinguishes the following subtypes of interrogatives: (i) yes-no question, (ii) information or question word question and (iii) alternative questions. Yes-no questions make use of interrogative clitic *-aa* to a constituent, except modifiers (Lehmann,1989: 232). The position of the clitic *-aa* indicates the focus of the question.

38. a. *raajaa raaNi-kkup paNam koTu-tt-aan-aa*?

Raja Rani_DAT money give_PAS_he_ICL

'Did Raja give money to Rani?'

b. *raajaav-aa raaNi-kkup paNam koTu-tt-aan*?

Raja_ICL Rani_DAT money give_PAS_he

'Is it Raja who gave money is Rani?'

c. *raajaa yaaru-kkup paNam koTu-tt-aan*?

rajaa who_DAT money give_PAS_he_ ICL

'Who did Raja give the money to?'

d. raajaa raaNi-kk-aa paNam koTu-tt-aan

Raja Rani-DAT_ ICL money give_PAS_he

'Is it to Rani Raja gave money?'

e. raja raaNi-kkum paNam koTu-tt-aan

Raja Rani-DAT money-ICC give-PAST-he

'Is it money Raja give to Rani'?

The question word takes the truth of a proposition for granted and ask for particular information of the proposition. That is they interrogate only a constituent of the sentence. The interrogative word does not have to be preposed to sentence-initial position. This is a characteristic of SVO languages.

39.a. *raajaa yaar-aip paar-tt-aan*?

Raja who_ACC see_PAS_he

'Whom did Raja saw'

b. *raajaa eppootu paar-tt-aan*?

Raja when see_PAS_he

When did Raja see?

c. *Raja engku paar-tt-aan*

Raja where see_PAS_he

Where did Raja see?

Negation in Tamil is expressed by the following three ways (Lehmann, 1989:228):

(i) Morphologically by a negative verbal suffix

40.a. *raajaa enn-aip paarkk-aamal/aatu poo-n-aan*

Raja I_ACC see_NEG go_PAS_he

'Raja went without seeing me'

b. *ndii ingkee varaatee*

you here come_NEG_EMP

'Don't come here'

c. *ndaan paTikk-aat-a puttakam*

I read_NEG_RP book

‘the book which not read by me’

(ii) Lexically by a negative auxiliary verbs.

41.a. *raaja our aRivaaLi illai*

Raja a genius_not

‘Raja is not a genius.’

b. *rajaa viiTT-il illai*

Raja house_LOC be_not

c. *kaTavuL illai*

god be_not

‘God does not exist’

(iii) Syntactically by a negative auxiliary verb *illai* is added after a main verb in infinitive form.

42. a. *raaNi ndeeRRu varavillai*

Rani yesterday come_INF_be_not

‘Rani did not come yesterday’

b. *ndaan inRu paLLikkuuTatt-iRku pook-a-villai*

I today school_DAT go_INF_not

‘I don’t go to school today.’

Tamil uses the periphrastic construction with the auxiliary *maaTTu* ‘do/will’ inflected for negative polarity (which is unmarked) to negate the future proposition.

avan viiTT-ukku vara-maaTT-aan.

he house-dat come-inf-do-neg-he

‘He will not come home.’

4.2. Reciprocal

Reciprocality refers to a clause in which two NPs both of which have multiple referents are interpreted as coreferential. One of the devices to indicate reciprocality is to mark one of the two co referential NPs with multiple referents. Tamil uses the same device as English does to mark reciprocality. The reciprocals co-occurrence of two case marked identical nominals can be represented as follows: *oruvar* + case…*oruvar* + case.

43.a. *raajaav-um raaNiy-um oruvarukkoruvar utavicey-t-anar*

'Raja_COR raNi_COR each other help_PAS_they'

'Raja and Rani helped each other'

b. *raajaav-um raaNiy-um oruvarai oruvar uukkuvittanar*

Raja_COR Rani_COR encourage_PAS_they

'Raja and Rani encouraged each other.'

The noun-coordinating particle (*–um*) to and the comitative particle (*-ooTu*/*-uTan*) to are different.

4.3. Reflexive

Reflexivity may be defined syntactically as follows: reflexivity refers to a clause in which two noun phrases are interpreted as coreferential. Thus, the clause *John beat himself* is a reflexive construction since the subject NP *John* and the object NP *himself* are interpreted as coreferential. There are basically two devices to mark reflexivity:

(i) marking one of the two coreferential noun phrases e.g. by a reflexive pronoun

(ii) marking the verb by a verbal affix or use of auxiliary verbs

Tamil has a single reflexive tan 'self' for all persons and genders. In simplex sentences, reflexivization is triggered only by the subject of the sentence:

44. a. *raajaa raaNiy-ai tan viiTT-ilirundtu turatt-in-aan*

Raja Rani_ACC self house_ABL drive away_PAS_he

'Raja drove away Rani from his (= Raja's) house.'

b. raaNi tan viiTT-ilirundtu raajaav-aal turattappaT-T-aaL

Rani Raja_INS self house_ABL driven away_PAS_she

‘Rani was driven away by Raja from her (=Rani’s) house.’

c. *raaNi raajaav-aal tan viiTT-ilirundtu turattappaT-T-aaL*

‘Rani was driven away by Raja from his (=Raja’s) house.’

4.4. Compound verbs, Adjectives, and Nominal –Adjectives

Tamil is rich in compound verbal formation. There are two types of compounding: (i) combining a verbal form with another verbal form (ii) combining nominal form with verbal form (verbalizer).

45.Compounding verbals added to the Gerundive form of verbs

a. Verbal participle form of a verb + verb

paTikkat-toTangku ‘begin to read’

paTikka aarampi ‘start to read’

paTittu muTi ‘finish reading

paTittuk-koNTiru ‘continue to read’

paTittut-taLLu ‘read excessively’

b. Noun + verbalizer

candtoocap-paTu ‘be happy’

happiness-experience

utavi-cey ‘help’

‘help do’

A number of adjective compounds are made by reduplication. A combination of certain abstract noun and relative participle form of the verb *aaku* ‘become’ form a number of adjectives, to the extent that *aana* is now considered as an adjectivalizer.

46.a. Reduplicated adjective compound

paccai-paceel ‘greenish’

cekkac-ceveel ‘reddish’

veLLai-veLiir ‘whitish’

kannang-kareel ‘balakish’

b. Noun +aana

azhak-aana ‘beautiful’

inimai-aana ‘sweet’

teLiv-aana ‘clear’

No elements can be inserted between the non-finite form and the compounding verbals.

47. Compounding verbs added to the continuative Form of Verbs

paTikka muyal	‘try to read’
paTittu muTi	‘end up reading’
paTittukkoL	‘read (from the point of view of the agent)’
paTittukkoNTiru	‘is reading’
paTittuvai	‘read (from the point of view of a nonagent)’

Only certain particles (*um* ‘also’ *maTTum* ‘only’) can be inserted between the continuative form and the compounding verbs, as in paTikka-vum muyal ‘try also to read’, *paTikka maTTum* ‘only to read’.

4.5. Modality, Aspect, and Tense

The modalities are expressed by auxiliary verbs in Tamil and they occur after main verb unlike English in which the modals occur before the main verb. Formally, these auxiliary verbs can be distinguished into three groups. The first group involves three auxiliary verbs with defective morphology: *veeNTu*, *kuuTu* and *muTi*. As finite verbs these auxiliary verbs can only be inflected for third person, singular number and neuter gender. The second group consists of auxiliary which occur as such with one inflected form only. These are the verb *aTTu* ‘join’ inflected for the portmanteau morpheme *-um* which incorporates ‘future tense and third person, singular number and neuter gender’ (which is reduced as *–TTum*) and *aaku* which is inflected as *aam* (<*aaku* + portmanteau *-um*) and *-aakaatu* (<*aaku*+neg+neuter). Finally, a third group of modal auxiliaries *poo*, *vaa*, *iru* and *paar*

occur as finite verbs with all tense and pronominal suffixes. The following examples illustrate various ways in which Tamil express modality:

48. Internal obligation

raajaa ippootu viiTT-ukkup pooka veeNTum

Raja now house_DAT go_INF want_Fut_NEU

'Raja must go home now'

49. Negation of external obligation

ndii inimeel indta marundt-ai caappiT-a veeNT-aam

you further this medicine_ACC eat_INF want_NEG_NEU

'From now on you don't need to take this medicine'

50. Circumstantial possibility

avan ingku var-ak-kuuTum

he here come_INF_join_FUT_NEU

'He may come'

51. Negative obligation

avan ingku var-ak-kuuT-aatu

he here come_INF_join_NEG_NEU

'He should not come'

52. Ability

avan-aal paTikk-a muTiy-um

he_INS read_INF end_FUT_NEU

'He can read'

53. Third person hortative

raajaa ingkee vara-TTum

Raja here come_INF_agree_FUT_NEU

'Let Raja come here'

4.6. Compound verbals representing the speaker's attitude

Tamil is a language that often forces the speaker to express an attitude toward the action described in a sentence. The auxiliaries such as *tolai, pooTu, taLLu, kiTa, kizhi, poo* express speaker's subjective evaluation, that is speaker's personal opinion, of the event expressed by the clause (Lehmann 1989:222). Like other auxiliaries attitudinal auxiliaries too occur after the main verb.

53. i. Speaker's antipathy towards the event expressed by the clause

a. *raajaa avaL-iTam ellaam coll-i-ttolai-tt-aan*

Raja she_to all say_PAS_VP loose_PAS_he

'Raja told everything to her, damn it'

54. ii. Speaker's positive or negative attitude towards the accelerated rate of the action expressed by the main clause

a. *avaL kuzhandtaikaL-aakkap peR-R-u taLL-in-aaL*

she children_ADV deliver_PAS_VP push_PAS_she

'She went on giving birth children'

4.7. Passive and causative

Passive voice is expressed by the auxiliary verb *paTu* 'experience' added to the infinitive form of the main verb.

55.a. *raajaa pampaik ko-nR-aan*

'Raja snake_ACC kill_PAS_he

'Raja killed a snake'

b. *paampu raajaav-aal koll-a-ppaT-T-atu*

snake Raja_INS kill_INF_experience_PAS_it

'The snake was killed by Raja'

Causative is expressed by the auxiliary *vai*, 'put' *cey* 'do' added to the infinitive form of a main verb.

56.a. *rajaa va-ndt-aan*

Raja come_PAS_he

b. *raaNi raajaavai var-a vai-tt-aaL*

Rani Raja_ACC come_INF put_PAS_she

'Rani made Raja to come'

4.8. Order of Verbal Elements

We have already seen that, given a sequence of verbal forms, the right most element has a higher scope than the rest of the sequence. Thus, the sequence V + Causative + Passive is the passive of V + Causative (i.e., be caused to V'), while the sequence V + Passive + causative is the causative form of V + Passive (i.e., 'cause to be V-ed'). Similarly, the sequence V + Incipient + Causative means 'cause to begin to V', while the sequence V + Causative + Incipient means 'begin to cause to V'. Whether a given sequence of verbal forms is acceptable or not is determined by various syntactic and semantic factors. For example, observe the following sentences:

57.a. *raajaav-aal paan-ai uTaikk-a-ppT-T-atu*

Raja-Ins pot-Acc break-INF PAS-it

'The pot is broken by Raja'

b. *raajaav-aal paan-ai uTaikk-a vaikk-a-ppaT-T-atu*

Raja pot-Acc break-INF keep_INF_PASS_PAS_IT

put-INF- Experience-it

The pot is made to be broken by Raja

c. * *rajaav-aal paanai uTaikk-a-ppaT-a vai-tt-atu*

57.a. has the causative auxiliary preceding the passive (i.e. *uTaikka vaikkappaTa* 'be caused to be broken', while 57.b. has the same morphemes in reverse order (i.e. *uTaikkappaTavai* 'cause to be broken').

5. Adverbs

5.1. Types of Adverbs

Except certain adverbs like *angku* `there', i*ng*ku `here', and *engku* `where', other adverbs are different forms of nouns and verbs. They are produced as the function and/or meanings of the nouns and verbs and their inflected forms are changed and a few are lexicalized as adverbial suffixes. As this is the case, adverbs can be considered as a secondary formation due to change in the function of the inflected and non-inflected forms of nouns and verbs.

The grammatical literature distinguishes between simple and derived adverbs in Modern Tamil. Derived adverbs are said to be formed from nouns by the suffixation of the so-called adverbializing suffix *-aaka*

58.a. *raaNi azhak-aakap paaTu-kiR-aaL*

Rani beauty_ADV sing_PRE_she

'Rani sings well'

b. *raajaa veekam-aaka ooTu-kiR-aan*

Raja fastness_ADV run_PRE_he

'Raja Runs fast'

In the same way a number of uninflected and inflected noun and verb forms are syntactically reanalysed to a closed set of postpositions in Modern Tamil. So are also a number of noun and verb forms categorically reanalysed to a closed set of adverbs. There is even an overlap of word forms which are postpositions and adverbs.

59. Uninflected noun forms (+euphonic clitic *-ee*)

a. *raajaa meelee paRa-ndt-aan*

Raja up fly_PAS_he

Raja flew up'

b. *raaNi etiree va-ndt-aaL*

Rani opposite come_PAS_she

Rani came opposite'

60. Nouns inflected for locative case

raaNi ndaTuv-il ndiR-kiR-aaL

Rani centre_LOC stand_PRE_she

'Rani stands at the centre'

Tamil is rich in onomatopoeic adverbs. Onomatopoeic elements added to the verbal participial form (*enRu*) of the verb *en* 'say' form a number of adverbs: *paTaar-enRu* 'loudly' *tiTiir-enRu* 'suddenly'. There are reduplicated compounds of onomatopoetic and non-onomatopoeic type (e.g. *mella mella* 'slowly', *paTapaTavenRu* 'fast'.

5.2. Sentential Adverbs

A number of inflected noun and verb forms are syntactically reanalysed to sentential adverbs or adverbial connectives. Hereby, they occur in a pre-sentential position and express the semantic relation between two sentences, e.g. cause, contrast, etc. For example contrast can be expressed by the following words: *appiTiyum 'nevertheless', aanaalum 'but, however', irundtaalum, however', etukkum 'anyhow.*

61. *en-akku kaal-il vali. appaTiyum naan ooTTappandtayatt-il kalandtuko-NT-een*

I_DAT leg_LOC pain. Neverthless I running race_LOC participate_PAS_I

'I have pain in my leg. Neverthless I participated in the running race'

5.3. Some characteristics of Adverbs

In Tamil, adverbs are placed to the left of the constituents that they modify:

62.a. *ndaan puttakatt-ai aarvam-aakap paTi-tt-een*

I book_ACC enthusiasm_ADV read_PAS_I

'I studied the book enthusiastically'

b. *mika metuv-aaka ndaTa*
more slow-ADV walk

'Walk more slowly.'

Adverbs can occur in any phrasal positition before a verb.

63.a. *raajaa raaNi-kkup paNam taaraaLam-aakak koTu-tt-aan*

Raja Rani_DAT money lavish_ADV give_PAS_he

Raja gave Rani money lavishly'

b. *raajaa raaNi-kkut taaraaaLam-aakap paNam koTu-tt-aan*

c. *raajaa taaraaLam-aaka raaNi-kkup paNam koTu-tt-aan*

d. *taaraaLamaaka raajaa raaNikkup paNam koTuttaan*

6. Compound and complex sentences

6.1. Coordination and Subordination

Two clauses are combined together in coordination by the use of coordinating elements and in subordination with the use of non-finite and infinite verb forms in combination with or without subordinator. The non-finite forms occur as infinite clause, verbal participial clause, conditional clause and adjectival clause.

Co-ordination refers to the process of conjoining two or more elements of equal categorical status of the three syntactic levels – word, phrasal, sentential – to one conjoined structure, in which all elements have equal status or rank. Thus, two nouns (N) can be co-ordinated to a noun coordination: N → N + N, two noun phrases (NP), and two clauses (S) can be co-ordinated to a sentence co-ordination: S → S + S. Words, phrases, and clauses are co-ordinated by co-ordinating morphemes referred to as co-ordinators, which express the semantic (logical) connections between elements conjoined. Tamil employs two types of co-

ordinators. In one type of coordination the clitics *-um* 'and', *-oo* 'or', and *-aa* 'whether; or', occur after each element conjoined.

64.a. *raajaav-um raaNiy-um cennai-kkuc ce-nR-aarkaL*

Raja_CO Rani_CO Chennai_DAT go_PAS_they

Raja and Rani went to Chennai'

b. *raajaav-oo raaNiy-oo cennai-kkuc cel-v-aarkaL*

Raja_CO Rani_CO Chennai_DAT go_FUT_they

'Raja or Rani will go to Chennai'

In another type of coordination free forms, such as *allatu* 'or', *illaiyaanaal* 'or' and *aanaal* 'but', that is co-ordinating conjunctions occur in-between the elements conjoined.

65.a. *raajaa allatu/illaiyaanaal raaNi cennai-kkuc cel-v-aarkaL*

Raja or Rani Chennai_DAT go_FUT_they

'Either Raja or Rani will go to Chennai'

b. *raajaa aluvalakattiRkuc ce-nR-aan. aanaal veelai ceyavillai*

Raja office_DAT go_PAS_he. but work do_INF_not

'Raja went to office, but did not work'

Tamil has a large system of complex sentence formation involving subordination. Subordination takes place by embedding or adjoining a clause into another clause. When a clause is embedded into or adjoined to the structure of another clause in Tamil, it either embedded as co-constituent or complement to the left side of a head constituent: S-HEAD, a process which it is referred here as complementation, or it is embedded into a noun phrase as sole constituent of the noun phrase – a process commonly referred as nominalization.

In complementation, the categories which occur as head of a complement in Tamil are nouns (N), noun phrase (NP), postpositions (P), verbs (V) and the clause (S) itself. Thus, a clause can be embedded into a noun phrase as complement to the left side of a head noun or head noun phrase:

66.a. *raajaa ndeeRRu va-ndt-a raaNiyiac candti-tt-aan*

Raja yestreday come_PAS_RPM Rani_ACC meet_PAS_he

'Raja met Rani who came yesterday'

b. *raajaa vandta pinnar raaNi vandtaaL*

Raja come_PAS_ADJ after Rani come_PAS_she

Rani came after Raja'

c. *raajaa pazham caapiTTuviT-T-ut tuungk-in-aan*

Raja eat_PAS_VP sleep_PAS_he

'Raja slept after having eaten banana'

d. *raaNi tuungkiviT-T-aaL enRu raaja co-nn-aan*

Rani sleep_PAS_she COMP Raja say_PAS_he

'Raja said that Rani had slept'

6.2. Indirect Statements

The most common form of reporting an utterance in Tamil is the embedding of a clause (i) with the complementizing verb form *enRu* before a verb of verbal utterance such as *col* 'say', or *keeL* 'ask' or (ii) without complementizing verb form before the verb *en* 'say'.

67.a. *raajaa ndaaLai uurukkut tirumpuvaan enRu raaNi connaaL*

Raja tomorrow village_DAT return_FUT_he that Rani say_PAS_she

'Rani said that Raja would return to village tomorrow.'

b. *raaNi raajaa ndaaLai uur-ukkup poo-kiR-aan en-R-aaL*

Rani Raja tomorrow village_DAT go_PRE_he say_PAS_she

'Rani said that Raja would go to the village tomorrow'

c. *raajaa vandtuviT-T-aan-aa enRu raaNi keeT-T-aaL*

Raja come_PAS_he_ICL that Rani ask_PAS_she

'Rani asked "Did Raja come"

d. *kaalaiyil ezhu-ndt-u paTippatu ndallatu en-R-aar*

morning wake up_VP studying good_it that he say_PAS_he

'He said it is good to study waking up in the morning.

7. Grammatical Processes

7.1. Pronouns and Deletion of Noun Phrases

Pronouns are a closed subset of the parts of speech of nouns. The property which groups pronouns as a subset of nouns is largely syntactical. There are two sets of pronouns: neutral pronouns which are nominative and oblique pronouns which are stems to which case suffixes can be added. There are pronouns for first person, second person and third person. All the pronouns have singular and plural forms. Third person pronouns are distinguished for proximity/remoteness, gender and status. Different forms of second and third persons are used depending upon the relative status of the speaker and the hearer, and upon the speech level.

Pronouns is used as a substitute of a noun if uttered previously in a clause or sentence.

68.a. *raaNi tan kaNavan-ai paar-tt-aaL*
Rani self husband-ACC see-PAS-he
'Rani saw her husband'

b. *raajaa 'ndaan ndaaLai cennai-kku varu-v-een' enRu avan ndaNpan-iTam kuuR-in-aan*

Raj I tomorrow Chennai _DAT come_FUT_I that his friend_TO say_PAST_he

'Raja told his friend that he would come to Chennai tomorrow'

Noun phrases are deleted when they occur repeatedly (see the chapter on 'Coordination and Subordination in English and Tamil). This is called gapping. Gapping is found both in English and Tamil.

69.a. *raja cappiT-T-u viT-Tu aluvalakattiR-kup puRappaT-T-aan*

Raja eat_PAS_VBP leave-PAS_VBP

'After taking food Raja stated to go office'

b. *ndaan enn-uTaiya ndaNpan-aic candti-tt-een*

I I _GEN friend_ACC meet_PAS_I

'I met my friend'

c. *ndii poo*

you go

ndiingkaL poo-ngkaL

you (hon/pl) go_you(hon/pl)

'You (hon/pl) go'

d. *avan ndeeRRu uur-ukku va-ndt-aan*

he yesterday village come_PAST_he

'He came to village yesterday'

e. *avar ndeeRRu uur-ukku va-ndt-aar*

he (hon) yesterday village_DAT come_PAS_he (hon)

'He (hon) came to the village yesterday'

7.2. Deletion of Verbs

English has a syntactic process called verb phrase deletion that deletes a verb phrase, leaving behind an auxiliary verb or infinitival *to***.** For example, observe the following sentences:

70. i. Speaker A: Did you go to Boston yesterday?

Speaker B: Yes, I did. (go to Boston yesterday deleted)

ii. Speaker A: Who was killed in the accident?

Speaker B: John was. (killed in the accident deleted)

iii. Speaker A: Do you want to go there?

Speaker B: Yes, I want to. (go there deleted)

Similar type of deletion of verbs can be seen Tamil discourse too.

71.i. Speaker A: *raaNi va-ndt-aaL-aa*?

Rani come_PAS_she_ICL

ii. Speaker B: *aamaam'yes'*

iii. Speaker A: *raaNiy-ai maNa-ndt-atu yaar*?

Rani_ACC marry_PAS_NOM who

Who married Rani?

iv. Speaker B: *raajaa* 'Raja'

Deletion of verbs occurs in co-ordination and subordination too. (see chapter 6). Repeated verb or verbal phrases are likely to be deleted in Tamil as well as in English.

72.a. *raajaav-um raaNiy-um paLLikkuc eenRaarkaL*

Raja_CO Rani_CO school go_PAST_they

Raja and Rani went to school.

b. *raajaa pat-in-aan atupool raNiy-um*

Raja sing_PAST_he likewise Rani_CO

'Raja sing and Rani as well'.

7.3. Scrambling

Word order in Tamil sentences is relatively free. It is possible to move a constituent within a clause; but one cannot move a constituent of a subordinate clause into some acceptable positions in a matrix sentence. It is possible to embed a subordinate clause immediately after the subject of the matrix clause. The following examples will illustrate this.

73.a. *raajaa ndaaLai uur-ukku varu-v-aan enRu raaNi raamuv-iTam kuuR-in-aaL*

Raja tomorrow village_DAT come_FUT _he that Rani Ramu_ to say_PAS_she

'Rani told Ramu that Raja would come to village tomorrow'

b. *raaNi raajaa ndaaLai uur-ukku varu-v-aan enRu raamuv-iTam kuuR-in-aaL*

c. *raaNi raamuv-iTam raajaa ndaaLai uur-ukku varu-v-aan enRu raaNi raamuv-iTam kuuR-in-aaL*

d. ?*raaNi raamuv-iTam kuuR-in-aaL raajaa ndaaLai uur-ukku varu-v-aan enRu*

e. * *raaNi ndaaLai raamuv-iTam raja uur-ukku varu-v-aan enru kuuR-in-aaL*

f. **raNi raja uur-ukku raamuv-iTam varu-v-een enRu kuuR-in-aaL*

7.4. Foregrounding

Tamil has free word order. The elements in a sentence such as subject, object, indirect object, adverb, etc. can be positioned anywhere before the finite verb. The placing of a element in the word initial position gives it prominence in a sentence.

74.a. *raaNi raajaav-ai ndeeRRu aluvalakatt-il ca-ndti-tt-aaL*

Rani Raja_ACC yesterday office_LOC meet_PAS_she

'Rani met Raja in the office yesterday'

b. *raajaav-ai raaNi ndeeRRu aluvalakatt-il candti-tt-aaL*

ndeeRRu raaNi raajaav-ai aluvalakatt-il candti-tt-aaL

aluvalakatt-il raaNi raajaav-ai ndeeRRu candti-tt-aaL

'Rani met Raja in the office yesterday'

There is a type of topicalization in Tamil which involves the occurrence of NP in a sentence in peripheral topic position marked with the form *enRaal* and followed by a sentence which contains a pro-form referring to that NP (Lehmann 1989:370). The following sentences will exemplify this.

75.a. *raajaa enRaal avan col-v-atu cariyaaka irukk-um*

Raja say_CON n he say_FUT-NOM right be_FUT

'If it is Raja, what he said must be right'

b. *raajaa koTu-tt-a paricu enRaal atu ndall-at-aakat taan irukk-um*

Raja give_PAS_RPM gift say_CON it good_it_ADV be_FUT

'If it is the gift given by Raja, it must be good'

c. *cimlaa enRaal atu mikavum kuLiraaka irrukk-um*

Simla say_CON it very cold be_FUT

'If it is Simla, it must be very cold'

7.5. Clefting

What is called clefting or pseudo-clefting in English is realized in Tamil by two-fold operation (Lehmann, 1989: 368).

(ii) nominalization of the finite verb and

(ii) marking of the emphasized constituent, which must be an immediate constituent of the clause, by the emphatic clitic *-taan*.

Optionally the emphasized constituent can be moved over the nominalized verb. The following sentences will exemplify clefting. The sentences in a. are unclefted version of a clause, and the sentences in b. are clefted version.

Cleft of subject NP

76.a. *raajaa ndeeRRu uur-ukku va-ndt-aan*

Raja yesterday village_DAT come_PAS_he

Raja came to the village yesterday'

b. *raajaataan ndeeRRu uur-ukku vandtatu*

Raja_EMP yesterday village_DAT come_PAS_NOM

'It was Raja who came to the village yesterday'

77.a. *raajaa raaNiy-aip paarkk-a aluvalakattiR-kuc ce-nR-aan*

Raja Rani_ACC see_INF office_DAT go_PAS_he

'Raja went to the village to see Rani'

b. *raajaa raaNiy-aip paarkk-at-taan aluvalakattiR-kuc ce-nR-atu*

Raja Rani_ACC see_INF_EMP office_DAT go_PAS_NOM

'It was to see Rani Raja went to the office'

Tamil cleft sentences lack a dummy subject corresponding to the English *it***,** and require the main clause verb to be nominalizd by the nominalizer *atu*. Lack of It-clefting (as well as of *It***-**extraposition) is a characteristic of SOV languages and of topic-prominent languages.

8. Summary

The chapter aims at listing the characteristics of Tamil as an SOV language. First the structure of simple clauses is described. Under this heading the basic word order, word order in colloquial speech, simple sentence types, agreement, subjectless sentences, adpositions, and comparison of inequality are discussed. Nominal phrases are described next. Under this title, relative clauses, genitives and numerals and quantifiers are discussed. Verbal phrases are described next. Under this title declarative, interrogative and negative, reciprocal, reflexive, compound verbs, adjectives, and nominal adjectives, modality, aspect and tense, compound verbals representing the speaker's attitude, passtive and causative and order of verbal elements are discussed. Next is about adverbs. Under this title types of adverbs, sentential adverbs, and some characteristics of adverbs are described. Next is about compound and complex sentences. Under this title coordination and subordination, indirect statements and questions and quotatives are discussed. Next is on grammatical process. Under this title pronouns and deletion of noun phrases, deletion of verbs, scrambling, foregrounding, and clefting are discussed.

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